



# How Does Your Garden Grow?



## News from UCCE Master Gardeners of Calaveras County

**February 2017**

### From The Editor

This edition of the newsletter features guidance on planting potatoes, demo garden news and events, the first Open Garden of the year and more!

Happy Gardening,  
Odile Morrison  
Newsletter Editor

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### Planting Potatoes

*By Teresa Spence, University of California Cooperative Extension  
Master Gardener Of Calaveras County*

Consider planting potatoes this year; late February is a good time to plant this crop. Potatoes prefer a light, loose and organic rich soil that drains well. There are many varieties of potatoes. It is best to buy seed potatoes; avoid potatoes bought in the supermarket as they are treated with growth inhibitors.



There are a many methods of planting potatoes. Here is an example of one of them: Dig a trench 12" deep by 12" wide. The length will depend on how many plants are wanted, allowing at least 18" between

plants. If gophers are a problem in the garden, line the trench with 1/2 " to 1" chicken wire, going up all the sides and leaving a couple of inches above the soil. Place 3 to 4 inches of soil back into the trench, place seed potatoes 18 inches apart, then add another 3 to 4 inches of soil on top of the potatoes.



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### Open Garden February 25

10am to 2pm  
**Topics:** Seed-starting & preparing the soil  
No Plant Sale  
[More](#)

### Need Help?

Call the Master Gardener  
Hotline:

**209-754-2880**

### Grant for Demo Garden

Whole Kids Foundation awards \$2000 grant to demo garden.

[More](#)

## February To Do List

By Teresa Spence, University of California Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Of Calaveras County

Mid February is probably the latest time to apply a final spray of dormant oil or lime sulfur to peach and nectarine trees. Make sure to apply the sprays before any green foliage appears.

If you want to grow tomatoes from seeds, it is time to choose the seeds and plant them in special seed starting mix by the end of the month. This will usually allow enough time for the plant to mature enough to plant in the garden by late April/May.

Keep up with newly emerging weeds by weeding on a schedule. This will prevent being overwhelmed by all the weeds sprouting and maturing later in the season.

## CalaverasGROWN Certified Farmers Market

UCCE Master Gardeners of Calaveras County will be hosting a third season of the CalaverasGROWN Certified Farmers Markets at the demonstration garden in San Andreas. This is a free event. Dignity Health has once again generously provided a donation towards advertising and signage. The market would be held the 2nd Thursday of each month, May through September from 4-7pm starting 11 May 2017.



The market features a wide variety of products from local farms right here in Calaveras County. Food that has traveled fewer miles is fresher, more nutritious and has greater flavor. Come to our market for the best produce in town and show your support for local farmers.

This is a family event with members of the Calaveras band playing jazz, swing and Dixieland and free activities for kids in the Children's Garden.

Products include:

- Fresh vegetables & herbs
- Olive Oil
- Honey & Jams
- Mustards
- Eggs
- Baked goods
- Fresh flowers
- Ornamental, vegetable and herb plants
- Soaps, lotions, body butters

For more information, please contact the Market Manager, Odile Morrison (209) 256-6506  
[odmo@comcast.net](mailto:odmo@comcast.net).

## Next Open Garden February 25

The Calaveras County Master Gardeners' Demonstration Garden will be open on Saturday, February 25 from 10AM – 2PM. There is no plant sale this month. The Demonstration Garden is located at the County Government Center, 891 Mountain Ranch Road, San Andreas.

This month our garden focus will be on starting your own plants from seeds. By learning some simple techniques, you can save money and also grow unique and heirloom varieties. Additionally, we will describe how best to prepare your garden beds and soil for the growing season ahead.



## New Compost Area



The vegetable team recently retrieved the compost bins and installed them in the vegetable garden. This area will be used to demonstrate slow composting, quick composting and to store compost that is ready to use. On Thursday 23rd February at 1.30pm we will be working with the new trainees to build a new quick-method compost pile.



## Whole Kids Grant for Demo Garden

Gardens To Grow In was recently awarded a \$2000 Extended Learning Garden Program grant from the Whole Kids Foundation to create an outdoor classroom area at the UCCE Master Gardeners of Calaveras County demonstration garden.



The Whole Kids Foundation supports edible garden learning spaces that encourage children to feel more connected to their food.

Gardens To Grow In is a local non-profit organization dedicated to supporting youth gardening and nutrition programs.

### ...Planting Potatoes

*Continued from front page.*

When the potato plant is 5 or 6 inches tall, add the rest of the soil around the plant leaving the top 2 inches above the soil. The potatoes will form along the stem of the plant.

Potatoes need adequate moisture, but should not be too wet, as this will rot the tuber. You will see a plant in about 3 to 4 weeks a plant. If there is still a chance of frost, protect the plants with frost cloth. In about 6 to 8 weeks the new potatoes will be forming; at this time you can gently harvest some of the small potatoes by carefully digging around the plant with a trowel without disturbing the mother plant. After you reach into the soil and remove some delicious new potatoes, gently tamp down the soil around the plant.



In about 8 to 12 weeks the potatoes will have enlarged, and in about 12 to 16 weeks the plants will be dying off. When the plants have dried up, dig

up the potatoes and brush off the soil, allow them to dry out in a cool, dark well-ventilated area for about a week to 10 days. Thin-skinned potatoes do not last as long as thick-skinned potatoes; these potatoes will store in a cool dark place for a few months. Each plant can produce approximately 2 to 4 pounds of potatoes.

## Calaveras Ag Awareness Day March 16

Ag Day is held at the Angels Camp Fairgrounds and is organized in partnership with the Calaveras Farm Bureau. The aim is to expose schoolchildren from all parts of Calaveras County to agriculture. Volunteers from many agricultural agencies and volunteer groups, including the Master Gardeners, provide short demonstrations to participating classes. The classes are guided through the fairgrounds by high school FFA students. Ag day runs from 9am to noon.



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